UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT - NDNY

1 (Court commenced at 2:04 PM.) 2 THE CLERK: Case is National Rifle Association of 3 America versus Cuomo, et al., docket number 18-CV-566. 4 Appearances for the record, please. 5 MS. ROGERS: Sarah Rogers, your Honor, with the 6 Brewer Law Firm, on behalf of the National Rifle 7 Association. THE COURT: Good afternoon, Miss Rogers. 8 9 MS. ROGERS: Good afternoon. MR. SCOTT: William Scott, New York State Attorney 10 11 General's Office, on behalf of defendants. 12 MR. DORFMAN: Hello, your Honor. Nat Dorfman from 1.3 the New York State Department of Financial Services. This 14 is my first time appearing before you. Good afternoon. 15 THE COURT: Good afternoon, Mr. Dorfman. Good 16 afternoon, Mr. Scott. 17 MR. SCOTT: Good afternoon. THE COURT: All right. I scheduled this 18 19 conference because I received a flurry of letters from the 20 attorneys regarding this matter. 21 Docket number 93 is a letter which was filed by 2.2 the attorneys for the NRA by Ms. Rogers, indicating that she 23 and Mr. Scott were having some difficulty agreeing to the 2.4 terms of a protective order and asking the Court's 2.5 intervention.

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Docket number 96 is a letter from the Brewer Law

Firm on behalf of the plaintiffs indicating that there would

be some difficulty regarding the service of subpoenas on the

Superintendent of the Department of Financial Services, who

the plaintiffs allege is a registered agent for the various

Lloyd entities.

Docket number 98 is a response from Mr. Scott to the various correspondence filed by the NRA, and then docket number 96 (sic) is a letter from the NRA indicating they may be seeking a briefing schedule to hold in contempt Lloyds of London for failing to respond to certain subpoenas.

And I know also on the docket is a Notice of Motion and Motion for Withdrawal of Appearance by Miss Gase, who apparently was previously a partner with the law firm of Brewer & Attorneys and she has left that firm. The Court is going to do a text order granting her application or motion to be relieved as counsel as there are a number of other attorneys from the Brewer Firm whom have appeared.

Ms. Rogers, let me ask you a question: Have you and Mr. Scott had any further conversation regarding the issue of the protective order?

MS. ROGERS: Your Honor, not since this conference was requested, apart from the correspondence that you've seen. We didn't expect to need to seek relief from the Court for something like a protective order and we didn't do

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so lightly or readily, but we've been attempting to meet and confer about it since November and not gotten anywhere, sometimes not even been able to elicit a response. So our hope was to tee this up for today, get some guidance or assistance. We'd hoped the protective order provisions we are asking for are not controversial or exotic and we'd like them to get in place so that third-parties on whom we've served subpoenas can submit documents so that the NRA can supplement its expert report which has schedules we have not been able to serve since they're confidential and so the litigation can move along.

THE COURT: Mr. Scott, sir, what can we do to move the issue of the protective order forward?

MR. SCOTT: Well, I think there's a couple of issues here, Judge, the first of which is the confidentiality order that we're discussing, I have no reason to believe that we won't be able to reach terms on. But the broader issue of that is that the order that we've been discussing, the terms that we've indicated to Counsel that we'd be agreeable to, don't allow the NRA to designate this information as confidential or any other party to designate as confidential. The order is designed only to how the material will be handled if it's designated as confidential by the Court or by agreement by the parties.

As we see in the NRA disclosures in this case, they asserted

confidentiality for a large swath of materials that we don't think are, frankly, confidential, and I suspect that that is going to require further motion practice before this Court to clear up.

THE COURT: Just to clarify to you and Ms. Rogers, there's no awards to the litigants who file the most motions in one year. I know the two of you seem confused by that, but I think there are seven motions pending. There is not an award when you hit ten, for example.

MR. SCOTT: I understand.

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THE COURT: I just wanted to make certain. Go ahead.

MR. SCOTT: I think our position is that we would be -- even if we're able to resolve the terms of that confidentiality order, it's not going to resolve the designation of this material as confidential. And if they decide to turn over that document without an agreement as to being confidential or directed to be confidential by this Court, they're certainly free to, but that's not an acknowledgement on our behalf that it is so designated.

THE COURT: So do you have some suggestion as how to move this matter forward?

MR. SCOTT: I do. I think that we're going to, frankly, need to set a schedule for how to brief those motions to compel the plaintiff's responses to our discovery

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demands and interrogatories. I'm sure that they may want to be heard as to a protective order on that issue. And I think, frankly, given the outstanding subpoenas that are at issue in this case, I know there's been over a dozen third-party subpoenas served thus far, the discovery motions that are pending and that we think will be pending, that's appropriate to at least extend if not stay the discovery deadlines in this case.

THE COURT: You haven't really answered my question. Do you have some suggestion as to how to resolve the confidentiality and protective order issue without the need for more motion practice?

MR. SCOTT: I don't know that there is a way, frankly, your Honor, to resolve that because I think that we have a fundamental disagreement as to what amounts to confidential information in this case. The NRA seems to be of the opinion that anything that they don't want to be made public is confidential, whether it's at issue in this matter or not. So I don't know that there is a way for the two parties to come to an agreement on that.

THE COURT: Ms. Rogers, do you have some suggestion?

MS. ROGERS: Yes, your Honor. The order that we filed as Exhibit A to our letter we believe is reasonable, fairly customary. We have a provision in there that governs

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the parameters of what can be designated confidential. We've tried to make that align with Rule 26(c). So just like the criteria for a protective order to protect a party from embarrassment, harassment, disclosure of proprietary or trade secret information, that's what we've set forth in here. So we only allow parties to designate materials confidential that are proprietary, trade secret, commercially sensitive financial information, things that at least in counsel's experience parties designate confidential routinely within the parameters of 26(c) and there is a mechanism in the order. First of all, Mr. Scott makes the point -- I'm not sure, he seems to argue that there's not an actual mechanism in here to designate things, but there is. The order specifies that if you produce a document and you produce it in TIF form (phonetic), which is standard e-discovery practice, that you can stamp it "confidential," that's paragraph 4 of the order. And there's also a mechanism, if we designate something confidential that they wish to contest or vice versa, if the Attorney General or a third-party designates something confidential that the NRA wishes to contest, we can meet and confer about that and if that can't be resolved, hopefully it could be, we could seek quidance from Your Honor.

So, you know, our preference would be to get this order in place. It allows plenty of latitude if there's a

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controversial document for the NYAG to assert its rights,
but I'm meeting and conferring with third-parties responding
to subpoenas saying things like we're an insurance company,
we can't produce the names of our insureds without a
protective order, and we're stymied until we can get one.

THE COURT: Mr. Scott, let me ask you a question:

Annexed to docket number 93 is a 16-page confidentiality and protective order, which I assume you've seen. Do you have specific objections to the order?

MR. SCOTT: Well, to the extent that the order allows them to designate materials confidential, yes, we do object to that. We have — the discussions up to this point have included revisions deleting their ability to make such designations. We think that they are attempting to improperly designate material unilaterally as confidential and that's —

THE COURT: Well, my understanding is, and you'll correct me if I'm wrong, if they designate a document confidential and you dispute whether or not it's, in fact, confidential, then you have the right to come to court and have the Court adjudicate the matter.

MR. SCOTT: As I expressed to Counsel before on this issue, I think we are sort of kicking that can down the line instead of dealing with it now, which is where we feel it should be addressed, upfront, as compared to as we're

preparing for summary judgment or some other stage in the litigation.

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THE COURT: So do you intend -- do you propose to do this document by document?

MR. SCOTT: Well, I think in the course of their demands, they have asserted these confidentiality issues. It think they can be dealt with on a broader basis, based on those responses, so not necessarily document by document, but they have categories of information that they seem to feel are confidential.

THE COURT: Isn't that true in any dispute involving a confidentiality order, Mr. Scott?

(Pause in proceedings.)

MR. SCOTT: I'm sorry, your Honor.

THE COURT: Isn't that true in any discovery dispute where there's a confidentiality order, one party thinks something is confidential, the other does not, and if you can't resolve it, you come to court and we adjudicate it for you?

MR. SCOTT: We can. I think the question is the timing of it as to whether or not we have to -- if they're allowed to designate it initially or -- and we resolve the matter now before the designation is made.

THE COURT: So you want me to go through and look at each and every one of these documents one at a time to

1 determine whether or not it's confidential? 2 MR. SCOTT: I don't think we would want the Court 3 to have to go through that level of --4 THE COURT: That was the correct answer, 5 Mr. Scott, very good. Do you understand, Mr. Scott, 6 Ms. Rogers, I have 300 other cases? I understand this case 7 is very important, but it's no more or less important than 8 my other 300 cases, so I am not gonna sit down and go 9 through every one of your documents with you, I can assure 10 you of that. So you both seem like smart, experienced 11 lawyers t me. Do you have some idea how to move this 12 forward, Mr. Scott, without our eighth and ninth motion? 1.3 MR. SCOTT: I can readdress the issue with my two 14 clients and see if they would revise their position as to 15 the confidentiality order, your Honor. 16 THE COURT: Well, who are your clients that are 17 taking this position? 18 MR. SCOTT: I would say that both clients, we've addressed the issue with them and that both had concerns 19 20 regarding the NRA's attempts to improperly designate materials as confidential. 21 2.2 THE COURT: So are we talking about the Governor 23 and Maria T. Vullo? 2.4 MR. SCOTT: And we also represent the Department 25 of Financial Services.

1 THE COURT: So you have three clients. 2 MR. SCOTT: Correct, your Honor. 3 THE COURT: Want me to give you a briefing 4 schedule? What do you want to do? 5 MS. ROGERS: Your Honor, obviously, our preference 6 would be to avoid further briefing and just get an order 7 entered today, but if Your Honor isn't prepared to enter the 8 order over --9 THE COURT: Well, I am not gonna enter the order 10 over their objection no more than I would enter the order 11 over your objection. You okay if I do that? 12 MS. ROGERS: I understand, your Honor. So, I 13 mean --14 THE COURT: What kind of motion do you want to 15 file? 16 MS. ROGERS: Well, we would move for a protective 17 order. I mean, I guess that's what we're trying to do --18 THE COURT: With respect to specific documents? 19 MS. ROGERS: We would prefer, your Honor, to have 20 a confidentiality order entered substantially in the form of the one that we've attached as Exhibit A to our letter to 21 22 allow for, you know, when a new document comes up, we don't 23 have to bring it to the Court and make another order, we can 2.4 just stamp "confidential" on it. 25 THE COURT: All right. So you want to make a

1 motion to the Court to approve the proposed protective 2 order? 3 MS. ROGERS: Yes, your Honor. 4 THE COURT: When do you want to file that by? 5 MS. ROGERS: We could file that, let's see, 6 today's the 12th? We can file that Monday. 7 THE COURT: Would you like some additional time so 8 you don't spend the weekend in the office? It's supposed to 9 be 70 degrees. 10 MS. ROGERS: That's fair, your Honor. How about 11 Tuesday. 12 THE COURT: I was gonna go crazy and give you 1.3 Wednesday, Ms. Rogers, but... All right. So you'll file 14 your motion by April 17th. Mr. Scott, when are you gonna 15 file your response? 16 MR. SCOTT: If we could have a week on that, your 17 Honor. 18 THE COURT: You can have two weeks, Mr. Scott. 19 You'll file your response by May 1st, and to the extent that 20 you feel compelled, Ms. Rogers, to file a reply, you'll file 21 a reply of no more than five pages by May 6th. 2.2 There's an additional issue -- or a number of 23 issues you raise, Ms. Rogers. Then you served a series of 2.4 subpoenas on people, including Lloyds of London, and there

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appears to be some question as to whether or not Mr. Scott's

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client will accept service on behalf of Lloyds, is that correct?

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MS. ROGERS: Yes, your Honor. So it's a bit of a misnomer, people colloquial think of Lloyds of London as an insurance company, but it's really an insurance marketplace where many individual underwriting syndicates offer insurance. And so what we've actually done is we've served 19 separate subpoenas on these different Lloyd syndicates, we define them as the Lloyds entities. Under New York Insurance Law, foreign entities like these that underwrite insurance in New York must designate the New York Department of Financial Services as their agent for service of process. There are various technicalities that go into that. designation statute is a bit different depending upon whether these are entities that are authorized to do business in the State or whether they are excess line insurers, which was the capacity in which the Lloyds entities functioned when they underwrote insurance for the NRA. So we think we have two separate bases to serve these Lloyds entities via DFS. One basis to serve them is New York Insurance Law Section 1213 which makes very clear that it's the public policy of the State of New York that you don't want foreign entities underwriting insurance in this state and then you don't want to leave New Yorkers with no remedy, no mechanism to sue them if something goes wrong, so

that statute is one basis.

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The other basis is that in the NRA's insurance policy with Lloyds, there's actually a clause that contractually designates DFS as the agent for service of process and we've cited a couple of cases in my letter dated April 5th. There's the Recyclers case --

THE COURT: Right.

MS. ROGERS: -- I don't remember the full name, but it starts with Recyclers.

THE COURT: It's Recyclers Consulting Group versus IMB Japan, Limited.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, your Honor. And in those cases, there are similar fact patterns where you have a third-party designated as an agent under a contract, the third-party purports to reject service, but service is still valid.

At this point, your Honor, I think most realistically we would just be requesting a briefing schedule and --

THE COURT: What kind of motion do you want to brief?

MS. ROGERS: Rather than to hold Lloyds in contempt, your Honor, we'd be content to just bring a motion to compel. We just want the issue adjudicated.

THE COURT: All right. I'm hard-pressed to hold

1 them in contempt until there's some showing that they've 2 been properly served. 3 So, I guess, Mr. Scott, what's your clients' 4 position, if you have one, regarding this issue? 5 MR. SCOTT: Well -- and that's partly why 6 Mr. Dorfman is here, your Honor. 7 THE COURT: Right. 8 MR. SCOTT: As the Court is likely aware, the 9 Attorney General's Office scope of representation doesn't 10 generally extend to --11 THE COURT: Right. 12 MR. SCOTT: -- subpoenas served, so that's why 1.3 Mr. Dorfman is here to answer questions for the Court. 14 THE COURT: Mr. Dorfman, what's your position 15 regarding whether or not you're required to accept service on behalf of the various Lloyd entities? 16 17 MR. DORFMAN: We do not accept service of third-party subpoenas on behalf of any of our regulated 18 entities. We haven't ever as far as I know. We have 19 20 opinion letters going back to 1952 which address this 21 precise issue that the agency does not accept third-party 2.2 record keeper subpoenas, which is what is at issue in this 23 case. We have additional guidance as recently as --2.4 THE COURT: Let me ask you a question,

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Mr. Dorfman: So suppose you have an entity that is not

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present in the United States, like Lloyds, but that sells insurance products in the United States, in New York State. How do people effectuate service of a subpoena upon them?

MR. DORFMAN: If they're a named defendant in the action, then we accept service of the cause of action. If it's a third-party subpoena, here I would presume I would have to go through the Hague Convention.

THE COURT: Ms. Rogers.

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MS. ROGERS: So, your Honor, we are content to file Hague papers as a backstop to avoid further delay, but we believe here that the guidance letters that DFS has issued in the past pertain to Section 1212 of the Insurance Law --

THE COURT: Right.

MS. ROGERS: -- which deals with entities that have more of a footing in and a connection to the State of New York than the Lloyds entities do in this capacity in this case. So we believe this is a fresh issue, a different issue than the one that DFS' past letters address.

Also, I've not seen the department address that we have a contract that separately designates them as the agent for service of process and does not limit the type of process, it does not say only a complaint. The subpoena is process, it needs to be served.

THE COURT: Yeah, I'm somewhat troubled by the

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idea, though, that two parties can enter into a contract among themselves that requires the Department of Financial Services to become the recipient of service. I'm not sure how you do that.

Do you want to make a motion or how do you want to proceed? 'Cause they're not gonna accept your subpoenas.

MS. ROGERS: Certainly, your Honor. So I think we would move to compel -- I would like to style the motion as follows, and Your Honor can tell me if this is agreeable: A motion to compel Lloyds to respond to the subpoena, which was properly served, or, in the alternative, a motion to compel DFS to effect service.

THE COURT: Who are you gonna serve the Lloyds motion upon?

MS. ROGERS: We would have to serve it upon the Lloyds entities, which we would try to do through DFS.

THE COURT: DFS is not gonna accept service of a motion. Maybe I'm incorrect, but Mr. Dorfman is shaking his head, so I assume DFS is not gonna accept service of a motion on behalf of Lloyds, is that correct?

MR. DORFMAN: That's correct, and Lloyds has advised us that they don't view our acceptance of a subpoena as being permissible under the statute either. I haven't asked them about a motion, but I assume their position would be the same.

THE COURT: Now my question becomes: How do you intend to effectuate service upon Lloyds?

MS. ROGERS: So, one option, your Honor, in a couple of those cases I cited, I have the same question you did, how can two parties in a contract designate a third-party without the third-party knowing or agreeing, and that's actually addressed. There's a case where CT Corporation is identified as the agent, CT doesn't know it, there's nothing filed with the Secretary of State, service is still deemed effective, so we could simply file the motion, make Lloyds aware of it and if we win the motion, then Lloyds is bound by the outcome. That seems to be what the Southern District did in those other cases, although the procedural posture wasn't the same --

THE COURT: Right.

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MS. ROGERS: -- it was basically after the fact, once the party won the motion, service was effectuated. The other thing we could do is, you know, if we style the motion as I propose, which is a two-pronged motion, either compel Lloyds to respond or compel DFS to serve, then even if Lloyds isn't compelled to respond, DFS has to go serve.

Does that make sense?

THE COURT: It only makes sense if you prevail against DFS. If you don't prevail against DFS, then you're back to my original question of how do you get jurisdiction

1 over Lloyds. But you tell me how you want to proceed, what 2 kind of motion you want to make, and I'll set a briefing 3 schedule? 4 MS. ROGERS: So we would like to move to compel 5 Lloyds to respond to the subpoenas which they have received 6 actual notice of and which we contend were properly served, 7 and, in the alternative, to compel DFS to effect service. 8 THE COURT: Ms. Rogers, have you had any direct 9 conversation or correspondence yourself with people from 10 Lloyds about this issue? 11 MS. ROGERS: Yes, we have, and they basically 12 articulate the position that they don't have a dog in this 1.3 fight, they've acknowledged they've received copies of the 14 subpoenas and they believe this is -- you know, DFS 15 maintains service wasn't proper, so they haven't been 16 served. 17 THE COURT: All right. When do you want to file 18 this motion by? 19 MS. ROGERS: Next Friday perhaps. 20 THE COURT: So you're gonna file this motion by 21 April 19th. 2.2 MS. ROGERS: Yes, your Honor. 23 THE COURT: And you're gonna serve that upon 2.4 Lloyds and upon DFS? 25 MS. ROGERS: We will serve it -- yes, we will

serve it on Lloyds via DFS and can litigate whether the service is proper.

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THE COURT: And I guess, Mr. Scott, is that something you would be responding to or is that something Mr. Dorfman probably would be more inclined to respond to?

MR. SCOTT: That would likely be through DFS

Counsel. We may assist, but it would generally be through

Corporate Counsel.

THE COURT: I guess, Mr. Scott and Mr. Dorfman, when would you folks like to file your response by?

MR. DORFMAN: Two weeks would be sufficient time if that's acceptable to the Court.

THE COURT: Sure. Sure. You'll file by May 3rd, a slightly different schedule than the other motion, but -- and Ms. Rogers, to the extent you want to file a reply of no more than five pages, you can do so by May 9th.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: Have I addressed all of the issues raised in your various correspondence, Miss Rogers, or is there more?

MS. ROGERS: You've addressed -- I kicked off the flurry of letters and you've addressed my issues, your Honor. The only other minor point I would note in response to something Mr. Scott said earlier about an extension of discovery, we understand the Court has other important cases

and we -- you know, our constitutional rights are at stake and we want to proceed expeditiously, but that's subject to the Court's resources. We think that if discovery is extended at any point, it should be an asymmetrical extension that acknowledges that the NRA has abided by all of the deadlines so far. It's DFS -- it's defendants, excuse me, who have failed to meet and confer meaningfully with us on a protective order despite our attempting to since November.

THE COURT: Of course, he has a different view of those events.

MS. ROGERS: Of course, your Honor, and we would brief it if necessary. But the only thing we want to flag is dates are advancing --

THE COURT: Right.

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MS. ROGERS: -- and if deadlines do get extended, we want the extension to be tailored to bear in mind that this is a case we've brought with some degree of urgency and that we've complied with our deadlines.

THE COURT: All right. Let me make you aware, and perhaps you're aware of this, perhaps you're not, but there is a motion to dismiss or partial motion to dismiss pending for failure to state a claim, which was filed back on December 19th. That motion will be decided by Judge McAvoy, that motion is not on my radar, so I can't control when

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Judge McAvoy will decide that. So that, in some way, will determine what we do with respect to discovery because what claims are remaining, if any, I won't know until then. So you can continue to conduct discovery, but I will give you sufficient time to conduct discovery once he renders a decision on that, but I don't know when he will do that.

I'm hard-pressed to go down to the Senior District Judge's chambers and tell him perhaps he ought to pick up his game a little bit. I need this job, so we're not gonna do that.

MR. SCOTT: Yeah, your Honor, as I said earlier, I think it does make sense to have some sort of extension of discovery in this case.

Mr. Scott, what can we do for you, if anything?

THE COURT: And I will grant you an extension of discovery once I get some sense of what the issues are. I mean, I'm telling you now that discovery will be extended. I'm trying to get a sense of when Judge McAvoy is gonna decide that case, what claims remain and then we can have a conversation and I'll extend the deadlines for you.

MR. SCOTT: Understood. I think the only deadline that's slightly more imminent is our expert disclosure response, which may be somewhat curtailed by where things stand in discovery.

THE COURT: Right. And they haven't filed their expert disclosure response, or maybe they have.

1	MR. SCOTT: They have, but I think they're in the
2	same position where they feel they need more documentation
3	to fully submit.
4	THE COURT: Sure. That was my sense from the
5	conversation. So, once we get a decision from Judge McAvoy
6	on that motion, I will schedule another conference and I
7	will reset the deadlines for you.
8	MS. ROGERS: Thank you.
9	MR. SCOTT: Appreciate it.
10	THE COURT: Anything else we can do for you,
11	Mr. Scott?
12	MR. SCOTT: No, your Honor.
13	THE COURT: Mr. Dorfman?
14	MR. DORFMAN: No, your Honor, thank you.
15	THE COURT: All right. You folks have a nice
16	weekend.
17	MR. SCOTT: Thank you.
18	MS. ROGERS: Thank you, your Honor.
19	(This matter adjourned at 2:29 PM.)
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CERTIFICATION OF OFFICIAL REPORTER

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I, THERESA J. CASAL, RPR, CRR, CSR, Official Realtime Court Reporter, in and for the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York, do hereby certify that pursuant to Section 753, Title 28, United States Code, that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the stenographically reported proceedings held in the above-entitled matter and that the transcript page format is in conformance with the regulations of the Judicial Conference of the United States.

Dated this 27th day of June, 2019.

/s/ THERESA J. CASAL

THERESA J. CASAL, RPR, CRR, CSR FEDERAL OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER